

FrontLine Employee

June 2004

A newsletter from the Employee Advisory Service (EAS)
Your Employee Assistance Program

Call EAS: Olympia (360) 753-3260 Seattle (206) 281-6315 Spokane (509) 482-3686

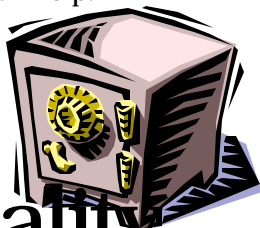
Web: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/eas.html>

Share the Stress!



There is an old saying, "A problem shared is a problem halved." When you are under stress, are you able to call upon someone in your life who is willing to listen to what you have to say—someone who is non-judgmental? If so, you are practicing one of the most powerful tools for managing stress and maintaining health. Sharing stress is not about whining, "putting things off on others," or demonstrating weakness. It is about personal strength, valuing vulnerability, participating in meaningful relationships, finding solutions, and maintaining health. If you struggle with practicing this life skill, it can be learned. EAS can help.

More on EAP Confidentiality



Q If a supervisor calls EAS for advice on supervising an employee who is having performance problems, will the Employee Assistance professional disclose to the supervisor whether the employee has been to EAS, our EAP?

A The EAS Confidentiality Policy is clear. If you are referred by your supervisor or personnel officer due to allegations of poor job performance or inappropriate behavior on the job, that person will only be told whether you made and kept an appointment, the time of your appointment and if further appointments are scheduled. A signed release is required, otherwise.

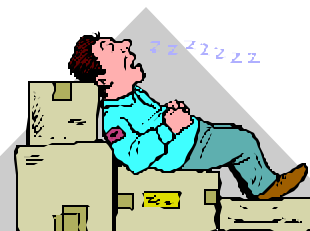
"Presentee-ism" Ready, but Not Able



Have you seen the word "presenteeism" in newsprint and journals? The word (it's not in dictionaries) can describe the syndrome of showing up for work even if you are too sick, or too stressed and distracted to be productive. Being at work even though you are too ill or troubled to be effective is a serious problem. It can lead to burnout or a health crisis. Use sick leave appropriately, but talk to the EAP if you are struggling with presenteeism.

Source: WordSpy.com

Better Sleep Fewer Naps



Benjamin Franklin reportedly was a believer in the value of an afternoon nap. Because he was a prolific inventor, maybe it helped his productivity. Although some research shows that naps can increase productivity, the idea hasn't caught on with too many employers. Until a siesta policy arrives, get enough sleep at night. Decide upon a regular bedtime, and stick to it even on weekends. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine before bedtime. Don't eat a big meal before bedtime. When you lie down, you will feel bloated, and it can keep you awake for hours. Regular exercise makes it easier to fall asleep and contributes to sounder sleep. Design your sleep environment for optimal sleeping conditions: cool, dark, quiet, and comfortable. Establish a routine that allows enough time for rest. The results are worthwhile!

Winning with Workers Comp



Most employers participate in workers compensation programs to pay benefits to injured workers and process claims for treatment of work-related injuries or illnesses. Although not perfect, workers compensation protects employees and employers alike. Help yourself and your employer by knowing your responsibilities with regard to workers compensation. Avoid these five common mistakes:

1) Not reporting a work-related injury or illness as soon as possible. 2) Failing to follow medical professionals' advice or instructions, and missing appointments. 3) Not giving your employer a complete explanation of the circumstances of the injury, and not responding promptly to requests for information. 4) Not working closely with those assigned to help you return to work. 5) Not seeking support from the EAP if you experience family conflicts, depression, and other emotional distress from being off work for an extended period.

Nutrition & Night Workers



High caffeine intake, fast foods, unbalanced meals, and snacking on high-fat foods can be "occupational hazards" for night workers: Tips for working night shifts: Eat the largest meal of the day in the late afternoon, not when you go home in the morning. Avoid vending machines and fast food restaurants. Take lots of fresh fruit and vegetables to work. Avoid caffeine after midnight. It stays in your system for up to six hours, disturbing sleep when you get home. Stay hydrated by drinking water frequently to aid digestion, and do not drink alcohol when your shift ends.

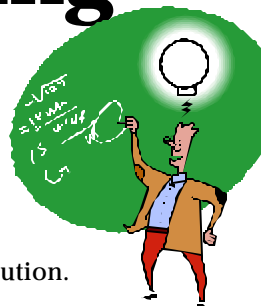
Avoid Lunchtime Libations



If your organization doesn't prohibit the consumption of alcohol during the workday while away from work on lunch breaks, consider avoiding the practice. A new study from Cornell University and the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA) shows that alcohol consumption during the workday can be followed by an increased risk of sexual harassment toward women by male coworkers, even when not impaired or intoxicated. The more you drink, the higher the risk of sexual harassment.

Source: Cornell University News Release

Problem-Solving Formula



Most problem-solving is subconscious and automatic, but more complex problems depend upon conscious, rational thought that follows a formula to find the best solution.

Here is one of the most accepted frameworks:

- > **Define the Problem:** Decide what you want to achieve and write it down. Ask yourself, "How will I know that my problem is solved? What evidence will exist to demonstrate it?" Get the vague idea out of your head and down on paper. Writing the problem down forces you to think about what you are trying to solve.
- > **Analyze the Problem:** Potential solutions arise from investigating a problem in all its aspects. Ask how the problem originated. When did it start? What maintains it? What would happen if it was solved, or not solved? Who or what contributes to the problem, and how? Confirm after this step that your problem is still correctly defined.
- > **Generate Possible Solutions:** Develop as many solutions as possible without evaluating them at this point.
- > **Analyze Solutions:** Investigate each solution for its ability to produce the desired outcome. Make a list of advantages and disadvantages for each proposed solution. The process of writing advantages and disadvantages produces additional insight.
- > **Select the Best Solution:** Look at your list, and begin discarding solutions according to the advantages and disadvantages assigned to each. Based on facts and figures, or intuition, choose a solution. If you end up with no solution, consider clarifying and better defining the problem.

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